



Date: November 4, 2021

To: Authorized Representatives of School Food Authorities (SFAs) Participating in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

From: Janelle Winter, MS, RDN, CD
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Subject: **Announcing:** Application Now Available for the 2021 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grant for SFAs

The School Nutrition Team is pleased to announce that Wisconsin has received \$398,070 from the USDA to award Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Equipment Assistance Grants. This opportunity is provided by the FY21 Consolidated Appropriations Act. Funds will be distributed through a competitive grant process.

USDA has not mandated priority be given to awarded schools based on percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced-price meals.

Eligibility

All public school districts, private schools, and Residential Child Care Institutions (RCCI) are eligible to apply if they participate in the NSLP. Eligibility for this grant is extended to any School Food Authority (SFA) with a previously approved State agency agreement on file to operate the NSLP (per 7 CFR 210.9(b)), and that would otherwise be operating NSLP in SY 2021-2022, while utilizing the flexibilities granted under the current SSO Nationwide Waivers.

Equipment

For the purposes of this grant:

- **Equipment** means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year. For this year's grant, the piece of equipment requested does not need to exceed the SFA's capitalization threshold.
 - **Information technology systems** means computing devices, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources.

- **Congress has specified for the FY21 Equipment Assistance Grant that each piece of equipment must exceed \$1,000.** Therefore, items like school lunch trays, knives, and utensils will not be approved, as it is unlikely that these would meet the \$1,000 minimum.
- The pieces of equipment requested must primarily be used in the NSLP and School Breakfast Program (SBP).
- If the equipment is used for other school or non-school programs and events, the grant award will be prorated based on the usage.
- Grant funds can be used to renovate or refurbish existing pieces of equipment.

Funding

SFAs can request a maximum total of \$25,000 for up to two pieces of equipment. Below are other funding guidelines:

- Equipment may be requested for more than one school within the same SFA.
- A centralized kitchen which services multiple schools may request equipment.
- A school may request to buy a piece of equipment in part with their own funding. If other funding is available, include this information in the narrative section of the application.
- Repair costs, including parts and labor for capital equipment, are allowed under this grant.
- When acquiring replacement equipment, the SFA may use the equipment to be replaced as a trade-in or sell the property and use the proceeds to offset the cost of the replacement property.
- SFAs will receive funds for approved equipment as a reimbursement through the use of the PI-1086 claim form accompanied by a copy of the paid invoice.

Key Areas of Focus

The grant funding is to be used for schools to meet one or more of these key areas with equipment that:

- Lends itself to improving the quality and nutritional content of school foodservice meals (e.g., replacing fryers with combination steamer-ovens).
- Improves the safety of food served in the school meal programs (e.g., cold/hot holding equipment, dishwashing equipment, refrigeration, milk coolers, freezers, blast chillers).
- Allows schools to support the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of the SBP or participation in the NSLP (e.g., equipment for serving meals in a non-traditional setting or to better utilize cafeteria space).
- Assists in improving participation by enhancing meal appeal (e.g., lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population,

highlighting healthier choices, redesigning menus that target healthier entrees/options).

- Enables Wisconsin schools to use locally grown foods (e.g., additional refrigeration units, two-compartment produce washing sinks, serving line equipment/salad bars, mechanical vegetable slicer/choppers).
- Improves the overall energy efficiency of the school foodservice operations (e.g., purchase of an energy-efficient Energy Star rated walk-in freezer replacing an outdated, energy-demanding freezer).

BEST PRACTICES

- School officials and local policymakers should work collaboratively with parents, teachers, students, and funders to identify and implement strategies for meeting equipment, infrastructure, and training needs.
- Nonprofit and for-profit organizations that have an interest in improving children's health, education, school infrastructure, and community wellness should aid schools in acquiring the necessary equipment.

Procurement

Equipment purchases must follow all federal, state, and local procurement laws. Keep in mind:

- As with all federal grant funds, procurement regulations at 7 CFR Part 210.21 and 2 CFR Part 200.317-326 apply, and equipment competitively procured using these grant funds must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable.
- Sealed Bids or Competitive Proposal procedures are not required unless the equipment purchase is valued over \$250,000. For equipment purchases valued under \$250,000, [Small Purchase](#) procedures are required (three bids and buy). When using the small purchase procedure, the three bids should be obtained from three different vendors.
- Equipment with a value less than \$10,000 may be acquired using non-competitive [Micro-Purchase](#) procedures.
- A specification is a list of the features you are requesting in a piece of equipment. It is NOT a manufacturer's product sheet that lists all options available.
- Obligations to purchase, made prior to a grant award, are ineligible for funding.
- Bids are valid for a specified length of time. **The specification should ask that bids be valid for six months.**
- Grant recipients are expected to fully expend grant funds within three months of the issued grant award.
- **Federal regulations prohibit the selections of vendors based solely on the fact that they are local vendors.** Refer to 2 C.F.R. Part 200.319 (7b).

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Equipment Assistance Grant Application Process will be a two-part process, in which SFAs will first submit their application and specifications to the Department of Public Instruction School Nutrition Team (DPI SNT). The DPI SNT will review the application and specifications to determine if the SFA qualifies to proceed with the bidding process. The SFA will be notified if they are eligible to proceed with Part Two, the bidding process.

Part One:

Beginning November 5, 2021, applicants will access the following via the [DPI SNT Equipment Grant webpage](#):

- Application Form (PI-6201) – **Due December 17, 2021**
 - Complete and sign via Qualtrics
- Equipment Specification Sheets (PI-6208) – **Due December 17, 2021**
 - Complete via PDF and send as attachment to DPIEquipGnt@dpi.wi.gov
 - Complete for each piece of equipment requested (a maximum of 2 pieces can be requested)

Part Two:

The DPI SNT will review the Equipment Assistance Grant Application and Specification Sheet(s). An email will be sent to each SFA in February stating if they are eligible or not to proceed with obtaining bids and how to proceed.

Awards

If selected to receive an equipment grant, a Notification of Federal Grant Subaward letter will be sent via email to each school/district in late spring of 2022. Once notified, SFAs need to complete their own procurement and expenditure activities within six months of the award.

If the SFA is not able to purchase a piece of equipment within this timeframe, consider requesting funding for a different piece of equipment.

Evaluation Criteria

Each application will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- The application is complete including specifications, documentation of three (3) bids for each piece of equipment requested, bid evaluation matrix, and signatures.
- Priority will be given to **SFAs** that **did not** receive funds from the FY 2016 Agricultural Appropriations Acts or the FY 2017, 2018, 2019, or 2020

Consolidated Appropriations Act, and do not service students who are serviced by past grant-awarded equipment.

- Costs appear reasonable.
- Equipment requested:
 - Supports expanded participation in the SBP and/or NSLP.
 - Improves the nutritional quality of meals.
 - Enhances the meal appeal (e.g., lunchroom changes that provide more convenience and appeal to the student population, highlighting healthier choices).
 - Improves safety of food served and overall energy efficiency.
 - Enables use of local foods.
- Existing equipment is old or outdated.
- Equipment funding resources are limited.
- Equipment awards may be based on statewide geographic distribution.

Timeline

- Application posted: November 5, 2021
- Part 1 (PI-6201 and 6208) due to DPI SNT: December 17, 2021
- DPI SNT will contact SFAs selected to move forward with Part 2: February 2022
- Part 2 (PI-6209 and 6210) due to DPI SNT: To be determined
- Notification of awards: Late spring 2022

For More Information

Please refer to the [SNT Equipment Grant webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information, including USDA guidance memos, SNT memorandums, resources to assist in deciding which pieces of equipment to purchase, and assistance in writing the equipment specifications.

For more information on how to create equipment specifications and obtain bids, watch [Equipment Grant Specification Form PI 6208 Tutorial 11](#).

If awarded, all procurement must be completed by August 1, 2022.

Questions regarding this funding opportunity can be directed to DPIEquipGnt@dpi.wi.gov.

SFAs that are awarded a FY 2021 Equipment Assistance Grant must comply with the following regulations, principles, and assurances:

Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and System for Award Management”
- 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- 2 CFR Part 175: “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- 2 CFR Part 180: “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- 2 CFR Part 200: “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 400: USDA Implementing regulations “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”
- 2 CFR Part 415: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations”
- 2 CFR Part 416: USDA “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 2 CFR Part 417: USDA “Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 2 CFR Part 418: USDA “New Restrictions on Lobbying”
- 2 CFR Part 421: USDA “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 41 USC Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”
- Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417
- Sections 738 and 739 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (Public Law 112-55)
- “The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), dated September 26, 2006”

Cost Principles

- 2 CFR, Part 200: Subpart E, Cost Principles

USDA Regulations

- 7 CFR Part 15: “Nondiscrimination”
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Public access to Federal Financial Assistance records shall not be limited, except when such records must be kept confidential and would have been excepted from disclosure pursuant to the “Freedom of Information” regulation (5 U.S.C. 552)

Assurance of Civil Rights Compliance

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d- et seq.), USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15, Nondiscrimination, and Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 42, Nondiscrimination; Equal Employment Opportunity: Policies and Procedures
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) and USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15a, Education Programs or Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.) and USDA regulations at 7 CFR Part 15a, Education Programs or Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance, and Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 41, Implementation of Executive Order 12250, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap In Federally Assisted Programs
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) The Grantee assures that it will immediately take any measures necessary to effectuate the requirements in these laws, regulations, and directives. The Grantee gives this assurance in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining the funds provided under this agreement.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment (Title I), state and local government services (Title II), places of public accommodation and commercial facilities (Title III). (42 U.S.C. 12101-12213)

The following nondiscrimination statement shall be included, in full, on all materials that are produced by the Recipient for public information, public education, or public distribution.

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

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mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

fax: (202) 690-7442; or

email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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